

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

An electronic points system ~~that~~ allows consumers to redeem online ~~these~~ points that were earned offline ~~is described~~. In one implementation, the offline-online points system is applied ~~to soft drink bottle caps program~~. ~~A~~ where a soft drink company is sponsoring a promotions program ~~where~~ and certain bottle caps are worth ~~so many~~ N points. A consumer buys a soft drink bottle ~~at a local store~~. ~~The lucky consumer~~ and discovers that he is the beneficiary of a winning bottle cap, and in particular, a bottle cap that is worth N points. Instead of redeeming this winning bottle cap in the traditional way, the consumer logs onto the soft drink's company's website and registers his bottle cap code. ~~Thereafter, after~~ After registration, the consumer can redeem these points for any ~~merchandise that is available for purchase with these points at any participating company's online store~~ auctioned items. For redeeming the points, an agent stands as a proxy for the consumer or the business that offers items for auction where the agent participates in one or more auctions individually or simultaneously.